

## **Dynamic Civic Engagement for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Campus, Church, and Community: A Model to form Volunteer Professional CARE Corps**

The United States currently faces a significant shortage of professional caregivers capable of addressing the health, education and related human services needs of a growing aging population. During the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there will be large number of people growing older with fewer professionals trained to address the many concerns of older adults. There needs to be a community service plan in place to assist older citizens to remain and grow older in their community. Such plan may include forming CARE **(communities acting responsibly everyday)** Corps Coalitions made up of retired professionals such as the clergy, dietitians, nutritionists, nurses physicians, pharmacies, social workers, teachers, etc., who would organize CARE Corps in communities to fulfill the gap in services for older adults who want to remain in their communities.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities will look different from communities today. I surmise that more and older adults will project and be pro-active in determining what they want their lives to be like when the time comes that they will need assistance from others. Many will have scaled down their homes and live in communities where their close family and friends are living. Networks and society groups will be formed to address some of the concerns that have been projected that older people will need. Therefore, what is it that needs to be in place now?

There is a need to utilize a user friendly model that can be adapted in all communities. One model is the 3C Model (Campus, Church, and Community) for Outreach. This model was developed, tested and used by a previous AmeriCorps VISTA Project at Texas Southern University in Houston.

The 3C Model for Outreach utilizes resources from Campus, Churches and Communities to fill the gaps in service to and for older adults and their family caregivers. **The Campus** (colleges and universities) serves as leaders for technical assistance, research and evaluations. This network of professionals takes leadership in identifying **HERO** (health, education, research, and outreach) Partners to improve the health needs and access to services for older adults. **The Church** serves as the component that maintains a constant connection to the community. It is only institution that sees more family members at one time. They tend to know the make up and needs of the community. The church provides resources such as membership participation (members are professionals from all walks of life), space for programs, financial support, etc. Many of the colleges and universities grew out of the church because in early years, the church was the only structure in the community that served as the school building. Churches and universities have maintained a working relationship for community-based programs to reach and serve members of the community. **The Community** is the component that includes organizations, agencies, and businesses that provide human and non-human resources. Such organizations include health departments, area agencies on aging, drug stores, retail stores, urban leagues, united ways, etc.

Coalitions made up from the 3C components serve as leaders to **FORMAT** the community by serving as Facilitators, Organizers, Resources Mobilizers, Advocates, and Trainers. Forming Volunteer Professional CARE Corps is in an excellent model to create a dynamic Civic Engagement for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community.

Together, colleges and universities, churches, and community organizations can educate elected officials charged with development of public policy and funding

priorities. There needs to be an all out effort to strategize to get people across the generations to get involved in state and federal advocacy efforts by writing letters, making phone calls, visiting elected representatives and by staying informed and keep current about issues that impact the lives of family caregivers and their older family members. By doing so we fulfill our responsibility as citizens and become actively engaged in society.